

CLAIMS

1. (New) A method of facilitating messaging outside of a defined user group, comprising steps of:
 - 5 reserving a plurality of routing codes for exchanging messages with users outside of a defined group of users;
 - exchanging messages between a first user and a second user, wherein said second user is outside of said defined group;
 - assigning one of said routing codes to a message directed to said second user by said first user, and
 - 10 temporarily assigning one of said routing codes to said second user's personal identifier so that said first user can easily reply to said second user without originating a new message.
- 15 2. (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein said defined group comprises a buddy group defined by said first user.
3. (New) The method of Claim 2, wherein said first user comprises a user of a mobile unit device, and wherein said second user is outside of said buddy group.
- 20 4. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 35, wherein said messages comprise instant messages.
- 25 5. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 35[4], wherein said step of exchanging messages temporarily associating one of the routing codes with the user comprises steps of:
 - composing a message for said second the user by at said mobile user device, said message including at least said second user's personal identifier in
 - 30 body of said message;

sending said message to a routing code assigned to an 'unlisted' function on said mobile device;

receiving said message at an instant messaging system;

5 capturing said second user's personal identifier by said instant messaging system;

assigning a routing code to said second user's personal identifier; and

sending said message to said second user; and

optionally returning notice of said assignment to said mobile user unit, so that future messaging is facilitated.

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6. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 35[4], further comprising wherein said step of exchanging messages comprises steps of:

sending a message to said mobile device user by said second user;

receiving said message at said instant messaging system;

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capturing said second user's personal identifier by an instant messaging system;

assigning a routing code to said second user's personal identifier; and

sending said message to said mobile user.

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7. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 35[4], wherein said step of exchanging messages transmitting the reply message to the user comprises steps of:

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receiving a message at said mobile unit from said second user, wherein said second user's personal identifier has previously been associated with a second routing code; and

replying to said received message by said mobile user by means of a 'reply' function on said mobile unit.

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8. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 35[4], wherein assignment of a routing code to said second user persists for the duration of a user session.

9. (Currently amended) The method of The method of Claim 35[4], wherein routing codes for assignment to a second user are recycled during a user session if the number of second users exceeds the routing codes available for second users.

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10. (Currently amended) The method of The method of Claim 35[4], further comprising the step of:

preventing occurrence of a condition wherein different second users are associated with the same routing code.

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11. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 10, wherein said step of preventing comprises any of the steps of:

delaying delivery of a message from said second user pending confirmation of said a mobile user's interest in receiving said message; and

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providing sufficient routing codes that recycling of codes is unlikely to be necessary.

12. (New) A computer program product, said computer program product comprising a tangible medium with computer readable code embodied thereon, said computer readable code including code means for performing the steps of a method for facilitating messaging outside of pre defined user group, the method comprising steps of:

reserving a plurality of routing codes for exchanging messages with users outside of a defined group of users;

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exchanging messages between a first user and a second user, wherein said second user is outside of said defined group;

assigning one of said routing codes to a message directed to said second user by said first user; and

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temporarily assigning one of said routing codes to said second user's personal identifier so that said first user can easily reply to said second user without originating a new message.

13. (New) The computer program product of Claim 12, wherein said defined group comprises a buddy group defined by said first user.

5 14. (New) The computer program product of Claim 13, wherein said first user comprises a user of a mobile unit device, and wherein said second user is outside of said buddy group.

10 15. (Currently amended) The computer program product of Claim 37[12], wherein said messages comprise instant messages.

16. (Currently amended) The computer program product of Claim 37[15], wherein said step of exchanging messages temporarily associating one of the routing codes with the user comprises steps of:

15 composing a message for ~~said second~~ the user by at said mobile user device, said message including at least said second user's personal identifier in body of said message;

sending said message to a routing code assigned to an 'unlisted' function on said mobile device;

20 receiving said message at an instant messaging system; capturing said second user's personal identifier by said instant messaging system;

assigning a routing code to said second user's personal identifier; and sending said message to said second user; and

25 optionally returning notice of said assignment to said mobile user unit, so that future messaging is facilitated.

17. (Currently amended) The computer program product of Claim 37[15], said method further comprising wherein said step of exchanging messages comprises steps of:

sending a message to said mobile device user by said second user;

receiving said message at said instant messaging system;
capturing said second user's personal identifier by an instant messaging system;
assigning a routing code to said second user's personal identifier; and
5 sending said message to said mobile user unit.

18. (Currently amended) The computer program product of Claim 37[15], wherein said step of exchanging messages transmitting the reply message to the user comprises steps of:
10 receiving a message at said mobile unit from said ~~second~~ user, wherein said ~~second~~ user's personal identifier has previously been associated with a ~~second~~ routing code; and
replying to said received message by ~~said mobile user~~ by means of a 'reply' function on said mobile unit.
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19. (Currently amended) The computer program product of Claim 37[15], wherein assignment of a routing code to said ~~second~~ user persists for the duration of a user session.
20 20. (Currently amended) The computer program product of Claim 37[15], wherein routing codes for assignment ~~to a second user~~ are recycled during a user session if the number of ~~second~~ users exceeds the routing codes available for ~~second~~ users.
25 21. (Currently amended) The computer program product of Claim 37[15], said method further comprising the step of:
preventing occurrence of a condition wherein different ~~second~~ users are associated with the same routing code.
30 22. (Currently amended) The computer program product of Claim 10 22, wherein said step of preventing comprises any of the steps of:

delaying delivery of a message from said second user pending confirmation of said a mobile user's interest in receiving said message; and providing sufficient routing codes that recycling of codes is unlikely to be necessary.

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23. (Previously presented) An apparatus for facilitating messaging outside of a defined group comprising:

~~a plurality of reserved routing codes for exchanging messages with users outside of said defined group;~~

10 ~~means for exchanging messages between a first user and a second user, said second user not included in said defined group;~~

~~means for assigning one of said routing codes to a message directed to said second user by said first user; and~~

15 ~~means for temporarily assigning one of said routing codes to said second user's personal identifier so that said first user can easily reply to said second user without originating a new message.~~

24. (Currently amended) The apparatus of Claim 23, wherein said defined group comprises a buddy group defined by said first user.

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25. (Currently amended) The apparatus of Claim 24, wherein said first user comprises a user of a mobile unit device, and wherein said second user is outside of said buddy group.

25 26. (Currently amended) The apparatus of Claim [25] 39, wherein said messages comprise instant messages.

27. (Currently amended) The apparatus of Claim [26] 39, wherein said means for exchanging messages temporarily associating one of the routing codes with the user comprises means for:

composing a message for said second the user by at said mobile user device, said message including at least said second user's personal identifier in body of said message;

5 sending said message to a routing code assigned to an 'unlisted' function on said mobile device;

receiving said message at an instant messaging system;

capturing said second user's personal identifier by said instant messaging system;

assigning a routing code to said second user's personal identifier; and

10 sending said message to said second user; and

optionally returning notice of said assignment to said mobile user unit, so that future messaging is facilitated.

15 28. (Currently amended) The apparatus of Claim [26] 39, wherein said means for exchanging messages comprises means for:

sending a message to said mobile device user by said second user;

receiving said message at said instant messaging system;

20 capturing said second user's personal identifier by an instant messaging system;

assigning a routing code to said second user's personal identifier; and

sending said message to said mobile user unit.

25 29. (Currently amended) The apparatus of Claim [26] 39, wherein said means for exchanging messages transmitting the reply message to the user comprises steps of:

receiving a message at said mobile unit from said second user, wherein said second user's personal identifier has previously been associated with a second routing code; and

30 replying to said received message by said mobile user by means of a 'reply' function on said mobile unit.

30. (Currently amended) The apparatus of Claim [26] 39, wherein assignment of a routing code to said second user persists for the duration of a user session.

5 31. (Previously presented) The apparatus of Claim [26] 39, wherein routing codes for assignment to a second user are recycled during a user session if the number of second users exceeds the routing codes available for second users.

10 32. (Currently amended) The apparatus of Claim [26] 39, further comprising means for:
 preventing occurrence of a condition wherein different second users are associated with the same routing code.

15 33. (Currently amended) The apparatus of Claim [26] 39, wherein said means for preventing comprises means for any of:
 delaying delivery of a message from a second user pending confirmation of said mobile user's interest in receiving said message; and
 providing sufficient routing codes for assignment to said second users that recycling of codes is unlikely to be necessary.

20 34. (New) A method of facilitating messaging between a mobile device and a user, the method comprising steps of:
 providing a plurality of reserved routing codes for exchanging messages between users and mobile devices;
25 in response to receiving a message from the user directed to the mobile device, temporarily associating one of the routing codes with the user;
 including the temporarily associated routing code in the message as a reply address; and
 transmitting the message with the included temporarily associated routing code to the mobile device.

35. (New) The method of Claim 34, further comprising:

receiving a reply message from the mobile device directed to the temporarily associated routing code; and
transmitting the reply message to the user.

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36. (New) A computer program product, said computer program product comprising a tangible medium with computer-readable code embodied thereon, said computer-readable code including code means for performing the steps of a method of facilitating messaging between a mobile device and a user, the 10 method comprising steps of:

providing a plurality of reserved routing codes for exchanging messages between users and mobile devices;

in response to receiving a message from the user directed to the mobile device, temporarily associating one of the routing codes with the user;

15 including the temporarily associated routing code in the message as a reply address; and

transmitting the message with the included temporarily associated routing code to the mobile device.

20 37. (New) The computer program product of Claim 36, the method further comprising:

receiving a reply message from the mobile device directed to the temporarily associated routing code; and

transmitting the reply message to the user.

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38. (New) An apparatus for facilitating messaging between a mobile device and a user, the method comprising steps of:

a plurality of reserved routing codes for exchanging messages between users and mobile devices;

30 means for in response to receiving a message from the user directed to the mobile device, temporarily associating one of the routing codes with the user;

means for including the temporarily associated routing code in the message as a reply address; and

means for transmitting the message with the included temporarily associated routing code to the mobile device.

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39. (New) The apparatus of Claim 38, further comprising:

means for receiving a reply message from the mobile device directed to the temporarily associated routing code; and

means for transmitting the reply message to the user.

On page 1, please amend the title as follows:

~~FACILITATING INSTANT MESSAGING OUTSIDE OF USER DEFINED BUDDY GROUP IN A WIRELESS AND NON-WIRELESS ENVIRONMENT~~

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FACILITATING MESSAGING BETWEEN A MOBILE DEVICE AND A USER

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